THE "ELEKTRA" OF STRAUSS

PRODUCED AT THE MANHATTAN OPERA HOUSE.

An Opera in One Long Act of Thrills—The Orchestra the Potent Factor in the Drama—A Score That Stuns and Bewilders—The Story of the Work.

The "Elektra" of Richard Strauss was produced last night at the Manhattan Opera House. Once again the enterprise of Oscar Hammerstein enabled the operagoers of New York to steep their souls in one of the latest products of the European operatic hothouses. The presentation was one about which there will be much talk. Some of it will be profound talk and some of it will not. All of it will invite people to sit in reserved seats at the Manhattan Opera House. This will make the artistic spirit of Richard Strauss proud and glad.

"Elektra" was first revealed at the Dresden Opera House on Saturday, February 13, 1909. The Hofrath Ernst von Schuch conducted and the famous Dresden opera orchestra plunged at the score. It matters little who sang in the work, for the singing is of a kind that signifies nothing. Ernestine Schumann-Heink, powerful of voice, bold of heart, massive in physique, was one of the original cast. She said that the opera was one grand, unsweet song of shrieks, groans and sighs. Not for all the wealth of Hammerstein would she try it again. So he did not ask her.

Strauss, it appears, set himself the easy task of showing that the Greek classicists were behind the times. They had naive theories of tragedy. They cultivated what may be called a sculpturesque manner. They endeavored to lift even bloody tales into the region of tragic poesy and to dignify them by a literary art at once chaste and penetrating.

Strauss also has theories of tragedy. They are theories up to date and by no means naive. They claim fellowship with the works of the brethren of the scalpel, the probers of the stews and sinks of humanity, the scavengers of human nature. He had no use for a libretto by Æschylus, Euripides or Sophocles. All three of them had treated the tale of Elektra, her brother Orestes, his friend Phylades and his mother Clytemnestra. Each of them had his own way of treating it, but Sophocles, understanding well how to inject a powerful element of sympathy into the story of a daughter plotting to compass the death of her mother, gave to all time one of the most majestic and moving tragedies yet conceived by the mind of man.

Some years ago a young Austrian author, Hugo von Hoffmansthal, took up this topic and proceeded to treat it after the manner of the modern atmospheric dramatists. He strove to recreate the old tale in a style similar to that of Maeterlinck. He aimed at the suggestion of nameless things done off the stage. He lets us hear the screams of a queen in mortal terror, he gives us swift glimpses of a paramour in the death struggle. All the time the stage itself is occupied by the gaunt figure of the emaciated and half maddened *Elektra*. Her soul, possessed of a blood red lust for vengeance, fills the air about her with a subtle essence of tormented conscience, of avenging death. She is the feminine counterpart of *Hamlet*.

The general method of the author is under the guidance of that appetite for the sensuous which has in recent years overspread German literature. All this is meat and drink to Richard Strauss. He has long loved the fetid inspiration of the flesh. He wallows in the mire of humanity. He plunges his own hands into the muck and then holds them up for his own adoration.

He finds in the putrid morbidity of Von Hoffmansthal's version of the ancient tragedy the material for a "dramma per orchestra." He summons to his aid all the wondrous voices of the modern conductor's huge instrument. He places before them a small army of representative themes. Then he conjures up all the bewildering devices of modern counterpoint and handing over to it the themes and all the instruments sets it writhing in a cataclysmic musical whirlpool.

But when æsthetic taste has satisfied itself by passionate condemnation of the selection of a chamber of horrors to present as a work of art, calm contemplation must decide that this tragedy has some power and that it is constructed with cruel skill. It requires no keen penetration to perceive the points in the craftsmanship, for they are cleanly made and well contrasted.

First of all the arch realist sets out to create the maddened mood of *Elektra*. He shows her prowling like a crazed creature around the house of the Atridae, seeking the axe that slew *Agamemnon* and endeavoring to coax *Chrysothemis* to use her strong and youthful arms in vengeance. The shivering fear of *Klytemnestra* and the shadow of impending horror are other suggestions of darkness for the instrumental pallette.

The climax approaches when *Orestes* returns disguised and falsely reports his own death. In the recognition of *Orestes* by *Elektra* we have one of the strong points of contrast afforded by the material of the drama. The slaying of *Klytemnestra* again sets the brain reeling with such music as only the furies could properly sing. Then comes an ironic scene, that between *Elektra* and *Ægisthus*. The death of *Ægisthus* is conceived in the manner of Maeterlinck. He is slain in the palace. We see his terrified face twice at the window. He shrieks for help. He is dragged away. It is intensely horrible. The music is even more so.

And then comes the final maniac ecstasy of *Elektra* and the shuddering dance. It is indeed a dramatic dance, a dance of death. There are no words to describe the vague but blood curdling qualities of such a dramatic composition. Yet it is not unmusical. And it is all tremendously skilful.

Representative themes are employed throughout this score. Ernest Hutcheson, a most respectable pianist, has recently lectured several times on "Elektra" and has put the substance of his discourses into a little red book. He enumerates forty-three themes, together with no small collection of variants and developments.

There are themes for Agamemnon, the axe, *Elektra*, murder, *Elektra's* hate, *Klytemnestra*, *Ægisthus*, retribution, blood, *Chrysothemis*, doom, dream, nightmare, *Klytemnestra's* death blow and other important and transfiguring thoughts, not to speak of *Elektra's* digging, the dance, *Klytemnestra's* wicked glee, recognition, assuagement, affection for *Orestes*, remembrance and similar matters perfectly suited to definite expression in abbreviated themology.

These themes are in almost every case mere fragments of melody constructed with a view to their use as mosaics in the vast picture of the score. There are no fully developed melodies, like the Walhalla, the Volsung or the Siegfried themes of Wagner. It would be impossible to conceive a purely symphonic composition being built of such themes. They lack the free and full utterance of the subjects found in Strauss's "Don Juan" or "Til Eulenspiegel."

On the other hand they fill the requirements of this score perfectly. When the composer desires to marshal seven of them at once in fiendish counterpoint, in foreign keys at desperate war one with another, these short fragments of melody submit themselves with inexhaustible malleability to the processes of a polyphony which smashes every rule of harmony and every ancient law of form yet by reason of its instrumental voicing shrieks with mortal agony the tortures of Strauss's racked souls.

With these writhing themes the man rears a musical page upon which the notes look as if they had been hurled in delirium. But hearing the work is far different from reading the dotted page. The system of Strauss proves itself as thoroughly suited to the treatment of this drama as it did to that of "Salome." The orchestral background is one vast kaleidoscope of continually changing color. Jarring discords, the desperate battle of dissonances in one key against dissonances in another, settle themselves down into tonal delineations of shrieks and groans, of tortures physical in their clean definition and audible in their gross realism.

Can you conceive of the inward scream of a conscience in the flames of the inferno being translated into the polyphonic utterance of instruments writhing in a counterpoint no longer required to be the composition of two or more melodies which shall harmonize with one another but of melodies which shall spit and scratch and claw at each other like enraged panthers?

Snarling of stopped trumpets, barking of trombones, moaning of bassoons and squealing of violins are but elementary factors in the musical system of Richard Strauss. But all this has been described again and again. It is the fashion to say that this latest score has far outrun that of "Salome," but this requires some explanation. In the writing for the voices "Elektra" is quite beyond conception. The role of the principal personage is indeedone long series of screams in the upper register. Only intense enthusiasm for the part and utter disregard for the voice will enabie any one to sing it.

But in the orchestral writing, which is the foundation of the drama, Strauss has done nothing more startling than he had already done in "Salome." Most of the new score, indeed practically all of it up to the scene in which *Elektra* tries to coax *Chrysothemis* to use her young arms, is in plain English deadly dull. It is neither shockingly ugly nor intricately stimulating. But the scene with *Chrysothemis* is genuinely expressive, while that with *Orestes* is much more so.

Here, indeed, the method of Strauss, by introducing one of those striking contrasts which the composer employs so craftily, produces a beautiful illusion. The final duet between the two sisters is excellently conceived. But the truth must be told. There are no such pages as the listening of *Salome* at the mouth of the well when *Jokanaan* is slain nor her impassioned address to the bloody head just before the outraged *Herod* decrees her death.

Here and there the instrumental color is as luscious as tropical foliage. Again it glitters like an iceberg. Strange as the distribution of keys sounds, the distribution of instrumental parts never sounds abnormal. To be sure Strauss writes trumpet parts that other composers would give to flutes and invites tubas to chant the florid sequences customarily consigned to the voices of facile clarinets. Yet in five minutes after the performance begins the ear is attuned to the strange doings, for the entire spirit is saturated with the atmosphere of the morbid drama.

It is by no means improbable that a far different effect could be achieved were not Henriquez de la Fuente, the musical director of the performance, so gentle and considerate in his reading of the score. What Strauss himself would say to this extremely polished version of the drama it is not difficult to imagine. He would in all likelihood ask the conductor whether he supposed that the composer wished to be mistaken for Massenet.

Mr. de la Fuente preserved the main outlines of Strauss's scheme of dynamics, but his generalizations were for the most part too great, and it is safe to say that the music sounded a good deal simpler, and correspondingly less expressive, especially in the earlier scenes, than the composer intended. There is an amount of significant detail in this score that will bear a closer interpretation than it had last evening. Yet it would be unfair to deny to the conductor's achievement a good measure of appreciation. Merely to keep the instruments and singers together through the intricate mazes of such a work is a task of no small magnitude, but Mr. de la Fuente did much more than that. His climaxes were of potent force and his performance of the occasional passages of what would have been called music as long ago as when Wagner was in his prime being played with genuine beauty and feeling.

To Mme. Mariette Mazarin, who created for New Yorkers the character of *Elektra*, fell the chief honors of the evening. This French dramatic soprano had given little more than a hint in previous appearances here of the vocal skill or of the intellectual and emotional power exhibited in this characterization. For page after page of the score she sang with astonishing accuracy an interminable series of notes and intervals bearing scarcely any relationship to one another in the old fashioned melodic or harmonic sense. She endued these utterances with clear and positive expression, and she emphasized their meaning by movements and gestures and facial expression that made the fearful woman of the new old tragedy live again before the spectators. As a test of endurance, physical and mental, Mme. Mazarin's performance was one of the most remarkable seen on the local stage for a long time. Her dance of mad ecstasy at the conclusion had in it a veritable touch of genius.

Of the others chiefly concerned Mme. Gerville-Réache laid proper stress upon the sensuality and brutality of *Queen Klytemnestra* without fully portraying her terror stricken nature. Miss Baron was the *Chrysothemis*, and she seconded ably the work of Mme. Mazarin without giving marked distinction to the rôle of the weaker sister. Mr. Huberdeau made a dignified and virile figure of *Orestes* and sang the music sonorously.

After the final curtain the principal artists were called forward again and again to respond to hearty applause, and the conductor, stage manager and Mr. Hammerstein shared honors with them.

Mme. Mazarin, in the centre of the little group before the curtain, fainted while the large audience was clapping and cheering her fine achievement. She was carried off and quickly recovered, but did not appear again.

The full cast of "Elektra" was as follows:

Elektra	Mme. Mazarin
Chrysothemis	Mlle. Baron
Klytemnestra	Mlle. Gerville-Reache
Ægisthus	M. Duffault
Orestes	M. Huberdeau
Fosterfather of Orestes	M. Nicolay
A Young Servant	M. Venturini
An Old Servant	M. Scott
The Confidant	Mlle. Desmond
Overseer of the Servants	Mlle. Taty-Lango
Trainbearer	Mlle. Johnston
First Serving Woman	Miss Alice Gentle
Second Serving Woman	Mlle. Severina
Third Serving Woman	Mlle. Milda
Fourth Serving Woman	Mme. Walter-Villa
Fifth Serving Woman	Mme. Duchene
Musical Director	M. Henriquez de la Fuente
Stage Director	M. Jacques Coini

A NEW EUGENE WALTER PLAY

CHARLOTTE WALKER THE STAR OF "JUST A WIFE."

The Wife, at First One in Name Only, Slowly Wins Her Husband From "the Other Woman"—Lack of Sincerity Compared With the Author's Earlier Works.

No playwright expects to strike twelve every time, so that it will not probably surprise Eugene Walter to discover, if he does discover it, that he has not sounded that desirable hour in the writing of "Just a Wife," in which Miss Charlotte Walker, who in private life is Mrs. Walter, made her first appearance before a New York audience as a star at the Belasco Theatre last evening.

Just what o'clock Mr. Walter struck will very possibly not be generally agreed upon. Some may perhaps express the opinion that it was about half past 3, while others will doubtless maintain that it was at the very worst not less than a quarter of 11, but it seems likely that few will hold out for the witching hour itself.

Mr. Walter has twice demonstrated the fact that he is at his best a playwright of uncommon constructive skill and an artist at characterization. His first demonstration was made in his "Paid in Full." His second and even more convincing demonstration was called "The Easiest Way." And, setting aside the technical merits of each of these plays, the one quality that more than anything else was stamped upon them was that of pure sincerity. Mr. Walter was very much in earnest in the greater part of "Paid in Full" and in every bit of "The Easiest Way." He had something to say, he knew what it was, he knew how to say it and he said it with deep effect. He knew what he was talking about and how to talk.

"Just a Wife" is very different both in content and in method from either of these earlier plays. It tells a story which, unlike the stories of those plays, can scarcely be regarded as typifying social conditions of any considerable extent. *John Emerson*, a highly successful financier, finds that his career is imperilled by his association with a woman of easy morals of whom he is fond and to whom he believes that he owes much of his success. To stop the mouths of his enemies a marriage is necessary.

He finds a Southern girl who longs to be rid of the burden of poverty and "keeping up appearances," in which she has been brought up. She does not love him, nor he her, but dazzled by his wealth and position and all it will bring her, she marries him. To a certain extent he is frank with her. He tells her that he does not love her and that he knows she does not love him, informs her that he married her because marriage would improve his position, but assures her that he will respect the privacy of her life. In other words they are husband and wife in name only.

Six years pass by, during which *Emerson* continues his association with *Eleanor Lathrop*, the other woman in the case. The young wife comes to learn of these relations, but she takes no action until one day driven by the fear that *Emerson* is going to desert her the jealous *Eleanor* follows him to the Emerson country home and encounters the wife, who receives her as calmly as possible and asks her to stay to luncheon. There follows a scene in which *Emerson* tells her that she has become a burden upon his career, that he doesn't believe she ever really did anything for him and that the thing must end.

The woman divines the fact that *Emerson* is really falling in love with his wife as he falls out of love with her and there is an hysterical outburst of feminine grief and nerves, followed by an encounter between the two women, the wife telling the other brutally that *Emerson* no longer loves her, that her game is in fact lost—that she is growing old and unlovely. "Yes," she says, "that counts. It's all we have—you and I."

Emerson, confronted by his wife with the knowledge that she knows everything, propounds the theory that it is man's to do the choosing, to take or leave. No one knows why it is so, but it is. To which she rejoins that it isn't so so far as she is concerned—that from that hour he is to have no longer the slightest right to control her doings. The last act tells of the departure of *Eleanor*, somewhat softened and a bit comforted. *Emerson* too goes away, but there is a hint that he is to return—to a wife who really loves him and whom he loves.

There is no difficulty in following this story, of course, and it serves well enough the purpose of an evening's entertainment. But after it is all over one remains in doubt as to just where Mr. Walter is driving. The outlines of the play are blurred. They lack the crisp incisiveness that speaks of sureness of intent. The wife got all she bargained for in her marriage—luxury, ease and independence.

She had no just moral quarrel with her husband. It seemed a cold blooded affair all around and it was hard to be much stirred up about it. One finds it a bit unplausible, too, that even a jealous, hysterical woman should follow a man deliberately into the home of his wife to reproach him with his faithlessness to herself. Indeed, if Mr. Walter had any purpose in writing this play around an American triangle beside the purpose of making an evening's theatrical entertainment he has not made it clear.

The lack of clearness, for example, extends to a doubt as to what the young wife is fighting for. It has not been made plain, at least not until the play is almost done, that she really has come to love her husband. Her motives are, in fact, obscure. You cannot take a vital interest in a struggle unless you know what it is about.

The play shows in all its acts the sure touch of Mr. Belasco's stage management. One scene in particular was highly effective from the point of view of its proportions. This was a scene in which a young Jewish business man emits some rather pleasing philosophy, quite naturally, in broken, fragmentary speeches, interspersed with a little whistling and snatches of piano music from the next room. It was a difficult thing to do, was worth doing and was done well.

The usual high standard of Belasco scenery was much in evidence, including a moonlight effect upon distant water that was really lovely and wholly atmospheric.

Miss Walker's performance exhibited intelligence, a great deal of skilful training and much hard study—perhaps it showed the study a little too plainly. Mechanics are necessary in all good acting, but here as elsewhere the great art is the art that conceals itself. The actress, who is a beautiful woman, never looked lovelier than last evening, and she wore some exquisite gowns.

Miss Amelia Gardner played the discarded woman with a good deal of fire and flexibility. Bobby North, obviously from vaudeville, played the young Jewish philosopher effectively. Edmund Breese burked his way competently through the part of the husband. Ernest Glendinning and Frederick Burton completed the cast. There were many curtain calls and a great deal of applause after the third act. Miss Walker was repeatedly recalled and the house would not rest contented until both Mr. Walter and Mr. Belasco had said "Thank you."

Royal Arch Masons at Albany.

ALBANY, Feb. 1.—Representatives from more than two hundred chapters were present to-day at the first session of the convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the State. The order of high priesthood was conferred on elected and installed high priests of the constituent chapters. The degree of Royal Arch was exemplified to-night. Jay B. Kline of Syracuse, the present deputy, is to be elected Grand High Priest at the election of officers to-morrow.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

There never was an English election, it is said, with so many literary men in it. Mr Mason has had enough of it, but Mr. Silas K. Hocking contests Coventry in his place. Mr. Hewlett addresses an open letter to the workingmen of England. Mr. Jerome lectures the plumbers and carpenters in his house, many other authors have been busy in the fight, while Mr. Methuen is standing for the Guilford division.

Mr. Winston Churchill has been largely identified with the historical novel; it is therefore interesting to note that in his new book, "A Modern Chronicle," which is to be published in a few weeks, the author has turned his attention to modern affairs and modern society. It will be noticed too that the most important word in the title commences with the author's favorite letter "C"—a letter which has appeared in the titles of all his books.

The best advertisement that any new book can have in England, according to Mr. Clement Shorter, will be that it has been boycotted by the libraries. Cannon Barry takes an opposite view and quotes George Eliot in support of his position. But Mr. Shorter claims to have known many old fashioned people who would not allow "Adam Bede" or Mr. Gaskell's "Ruth" or "The Scarlet Letter" in their houses. These books were just as offensively sexual to them as some of the modern novels are to us.

Robert Underwood Johnson, who has been chosen to succeed Mr. Gilder as the editor of the *Century Magazine*, has been on the staff of that magazine for thirty-seven years—almost since its first publication. He is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in France, and Cavaliere of the Crown of Italy. He was the originator with John Muir of the movement that resulted in the creation of the Yosemite National Park and he started the Keats-Shelley memorial in Rome. He is the author of "The Winter Hour and Other Poems" and other books of verse.

Gertrude Atherton justifies in her new book, "Tower of Ivory," the claim that has been made for her as the most cosmopolitan of American novelists. The hero is a young English diplomat representing a type which will be familiar to those who know English life well. The heroine is an American girl who becomes a prima donna, the greatest dramatic singer of her time. The scenes are the Bavarian court, the diplomatic circles of Europe and the smart life of London and of English country houses. Among the characters are Americans, English, Germans, Russians and Italians.

Lady Stanley, the author of "The Autobiography of Henry M. Stanley," tells a good anecdote bearing upon the discussion now raging in England on the fate of the House of Lords. She says: "John Bright frequently called on us on his way to the House of Commons. One day I handed him a very hot cup of tea; we were discussing the House of Lords and I asked him: 'Now, Mr. Bright, what do we want with a House of Lords?' He made no reply, but carefully poured the hot tea into his saucer to cool it. Impetuously I repeated my question, whereupon the great liberal statesman, smiling, gently tapped his finger on the saucer and said: 'This is the House of Lords.'"

Jean de Reszke writes in a letter to Henry T. Finck, author of "Success in Music and How it is Won": "I have read your book with deep emotion. All my life as an artist has passed before my eyes and my thoughts have been carried back to my dear comrades and to the battles won at the cost of so much labor, perserverance and self denial. May the story of my efforts and of the efforts of my illustrious fellow workers serve as a guide and an incentive for all young people who would enter the theatrical profession! Your book shows them the path to fame and I wish them success with all my heart."

Mr. R. F. Foster, the author of the detective story "Cab No. 44," has been noted herstofore as an expert at all kinds of cards and games and especially at bridge. Mr. Foster tells an anecdote which illustrates the difficulty confronting authors in describing a pretty face. Sitting in a London theatre one evening with some friends from the Savage Club he asked each of them to write a description of a very charming woman in a box whom all happened to know. Five of these descriptions, two by well known writers, were submitted to the lady's sister. She guessed that they were written of several women in society and on the stage but finally concluded that they were attempts to describe a certain portrait at the Royal Academy. When told that her sister was the model she laughed and said: "Really!"

Two books of religious interest are among forthcoming publications. The first of these, which is to be published immediately, is the long expected "Ethics of Jesus," by Henry Churchill King, president of Oberlin College. In this work Dr. King shows that a "very large proportion of the teachings of Jesus deals with the simplest principles of the ethical and religious life." The second volume is "The Gospel and the Modern Man," by Dr. Shailer Mathews, professor of New Testament history and interpretation in the University of Chicago. Both of these educators are striving to make evident the practical side of the Christian religion.

Three prize review contests have been held by Doubleday, Page and Company on three of their popular novels—"The Climber," by E. F. Benson, Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Marriage à la Mode" and Meredith Nicholson's "The Lords of High Decision." Commenting on the results of the first contest the judges stated that the average contribution to the contest was better than the average review which is printed in the newspapers—more spontaneous and less conventional. In the latest contest they have awarded the prize to a writer who, unknown to the judges at the time of their decision, proves to be the editor of an Arkansas newspaper, Mr. Clio Harper of the Arkansas *Democrat*.

Dr. J. J. M. De Groot, the author of the new book on "The Religion of the Chinese," is professor of ethnography in the University of Leyden. Recently he delivered the Hartford-Lamson lectures at the Hartford Theological Seminary, and this work has sprung from them. The object of these lectures, which are called collectively "The Religions of the World," is to prepare students for the foreign missionary field by giving them some sound knowledge of the religion, customs and beliefs of the peoples among whom they expect to labor. The Western man has made, Dr. De Groot believes, little attempt to fathom the inwardness of the Oriental, and the entire field of Chinese religion is comparatively unknown by the average man.

Susan Warner, who sixty years ago was doing literary work under her pen name of Elizabeth Wetherell, is best known by her first book, "The Wide Wide World." It was published in the early '50s, and it has retained its hold upon the public for more than half a century. Miss Anna B. Warner, the sister of this author of a past generation, has just published a memoir under the title of "The Life and Letters of Susan Warner" which presents the picture of a woman who aside from her work as an author was interesting for her own individuality and who united with firmness of purpose sweetness of nature and a delightful sense of humor.

"An Eighteenth Century Correspondence" is the title of a book being published in England, edited by Lilian Dickens and Mary Stanton. It consists of letters to Sanderson Miller, the architect, from Dean Swift (cousin of the satirist), Pitt and other politicians of the day—the Earls of Guilford, Coventry and Hardwicke and Sir Edward Turner.

The publication of a new set of Hardy's works has been arranged, of which "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" is the initial volume. The new edition will be of pocket size on thin paper with flexible binding. It is said that the success of "Tess" in this book of smaller size and of lighter weight has influenced the publishers to bring out the full set. The volumes will be issued one at a time, the next to come being "The Return of the Native."

"Mary Cary," a forthcoming book to be published next month, will have a child for its heroine, and the heroine will speak for herself. The youthful autobiographer utters her thoughts through the medium of a diary, because, as she says, "A diary is something you can tell things to and not get in trouble." "Mary Cary" as a story is just the whimsical, quaint, impulsive expression of a very human and natural little girl. "When there's love enough you can stand everything," Mary says. "When there isn't you can stand nothing."

A new edition of "The Autobiography of Henry M. Stanley," now on the press, will include a facsimile of a most interesting letter which has come to light as a result of this autobiography. It was written to his uncle in 1858, when Stanley was 17 years old, and is signed with his original name, John Rowlands. It is the only specimen of Stanley's writing in which he used this signature which has been preserved.

It is a surprise to learn in these days of the agitation of the woman's rights question that in autocratic Russia women have more rights than in many democratic countries. Mr. John W. Foster in his "Diplomatic Memoirs" points out that more than a hundred years ago the Empress Elizabeth conferred upon women absolute equality of civil rights with men. Married women can receive legacies, bequeath property and deal with their estate in all respects as if they were unmarried.

NEWS OF PLAYS AND PLAYERS.

Mary Mannering to Come to the Comedy Theatre Next Tuesday.

Mary Mannering will begin her regular New York season at the Comedy Theatre next Tuesday evening, February 8, in "A Man's World," continuing for an indefinite engagement. "A Man's World" is a drama in four acts by Rachel Crothers, author of "The Three of Us" and other well known plays. Charles Richman heads the company of players supporting Miss Mannering. F. Ray Comstock's production of "The Watcher" will be transferred to the Hackett, where it will be presented for matinée performances on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. "The Watcher" will in no manner interfere with the regular performances of John Mason in "None So Blind," which opens at the Hackett Theatre to-morrow evening.

Lew Fields announces that the first metropolitan performance of Blanche Ring in "The Yankee Girl" at Lew Fields's Herald Square Theatre will take place on Thursday evening, February 10, instead of on Tuesday evening, as previously announced.

Henry B. Harris announces the engagement of Orrin Johnson for the leading male rôle in Sydney Rosenfeld's new play, "Children of Destiny," which will have its premier out of town on February 17 and comes into New York the latter part of February.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry E. Dixey are receiving congratulations on the birth of a daughter. The little one has been named Marie Ursula. Mrs. Dixey was formerly Marie Nordstrom.

NEXT WEEK'S OPERAS.

The Programme for the Manhattan—"Elektra" Twice.

"Elektra" is announced by Oscar Hammerstein for two performances at regular prices at the Manhattan Opera House next week—Monday evening and Saturday matinée. The cast will remain unchanged with Mme. Mazarin in the title rôle, Mlle. Baron as *Chrysothemis*, Mme. Gerville-Reache as the *Queen* and M. Huberdeau as *Orestes*.

Mme. Tetrazzini will make her reappearance in opera after her successful Western concert tour on Wednesday evening next week, when she will sing the rôle of *Violetta* in "Traviata." The Irish tenor, John McCormack, will be the lover and M. Sammarco the father.

"Rigoletto" will have its first hearing this season on Friday evening with Mme. Tetrazzini as *Gilda* and M. Renaud as the *Jester*, John McCormack as the *Duke*, M. Vallier as *Sparafucile* and M. Gilibert as *Monterone*.

The popular Saturday night bill will be Massenet's "Hérodiade," with Mlle. Cavalieri as *Salome*, Mlle. D'Alvarez as *Herodias* and M. Renaud as *Herod*.

CLOSE OF THE RING.

A Fine Performance of "Goetterdaemmerung" Yesterday Afternoon.

The matinée cycle of the Nibelungen tetralogy at the Metropolitan Opera House closed yesterday with an unusually fine and inspiriting performance of "Götterdämmerung" conducted by Alfred Hertz.

Mme. Gadski was the special object of the audience's approval, however, and was repeatedly recalled after the second act.

Carl Burrian, Clarence Whitehill, who imparted unusual importance and artistic dignity to the rôle of *Gunther*, Allen Hinckley, Rita Fornia, Louise Homer and Bella Alten were the singers in the opera which brought this cycle to a distinguished close. The performance moved on the high level characteristic of the earlier operas. It is certain that no opera house in the world could have offered a superior representation of the Nibelungen ring.